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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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NATION'S ENERGY CONSUMPTION DISCUSSED

Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-IQTISADI in Arabic 15 Jan 80 pp 10-12

/Article by 'Isam Rif'at: "The Solution to the Jams--More Jams!"/

/Text/ Recently a higher energy council was formed in Egypt with the objective of examining the country's energy requirements in coming years and a strategy for exploiting energy sources in the oil and electricity sectors. At its first meeting, held on the last evening of 1979, the council reviewed the national program for nuclear reactors to generate electricity, the use of renewable energy resources (solar and wind energy) as substitutes for oil in coming years, the Nile barrage generating stations and the al-Qattarah Depression project.

When this step finally came, it was behind events which had been going on in the world for many years. It was as a consequence of the ground the October 1973 war prepared creating a suitable climate which the Arab oil-producing states exploited to raise the prices of their oil output, that the countries of Western Europe, the United States and Japan, all representing the "broad front of consumers" of oil, proceeded to prepare programs to cope with the energy crisis and to guide energy consumption in its different forms and sources.

We do not want to review the lines of cars waiting for gasoline or the rationing of gasoline here, or the regulation of automobile use which is occurring in some European countries (whereby one day is allotted to cars with odd-numbered licenses and the next one for cars with even-numbered ones, and so on). Nor do we want to review the precise regulations which some European countries are following by giving a day off every 2 weeks, after the Europeans had become accustomed to spending a day off on short trips outside towns every week.

Many are the stories of programs to regulate and guide oil and energy consumption in Europe and the United States of America, but more important than that is the fact that these programs started 5 years ago and that the intensity of the guidance has increased with every approaching winter and

every stipulated increase in oil prices--before and after which these programs have been carried out with great precision and determination.

What then is the Egyptian position on energy and energy consumption guidance?

What are some of the loopholes through which energy escapes and is squandered without yielding any returns?

The Egyptian Position

There are basic criteria which must govern us when we talk about energy, in particular oil. The issue is not one of looking for new oilfields and producing the greatest possible amounts from present and future fields, rather, in one dimension, it is a commitment to deliberate thinking about using energy without squandering it in any way, especially since oil, which represents the nerve center of energy and industry, will continue to occupy this status until the end of this century at least.

There is another criterion whose gist is that the new renewable sources of energy--solar and wind energy--are still in the experimental stage and many years will pass before they become economically feasible--indeed, more than that, the patents and licenses will be in the possession of advanced countries and the price the developing countries will pay to obtain them will therefore be exorbitant.

Consumption without Rules

This introduction is necessary as far as the Egyptian situation is concerned. When we proceed from this prelude to the variables in the situation, the first thing we start with is consumption, and the first fact here is that Egypt's oil production covers 80 percent of our energy requirements and that the local sales prices of oil products are much lower than those predominating in the world markets. For example, bottled butane is sold in the local market for less than 14 percent of the import price, and the local price of heating oil is no more than 8 percent of the world price. Gasoline is sold for less than one-third its price in European markets. In general, overall oil products consumption increased by 71 percent between 1973 and 1979. The increase appears clearly in bottled butane, most of which we import, as well as gasoline, kerosene and heating oil.

Statistics show that our local oil products consumption, which did not exceed 4.5 million tons in early 1973, reached 11.2 million tons in 1979. This demands that a study be made to justify the increasing consumption of every product separately so that consumption may be confined to practical possible levels and guided and so that energy use may be economized. Perhaps the question which raises itself is, Who is responsible for this increase? Is it public consumption or individual private consumption?

Oil consumption may be broken down into public consumption, that is, government consumption. The government sector is responsible for 53 percent of the increase in heating oil consumption, while the private and individual sector is responsible for 47 percent of it. In the case of kerosene, the government sector accounts for 40 percent while the burden of the remaining share, 60 percent, lies on the shoulder of the private sector. The same proportion holds for gasoline.

Oil experts have determined the reasons for the increase in the two kinds of consumption referred to above. The increase for which the governmental sector is responsible may be attributed to two main causes, means of transport and industry and electric power; the increase in gasoline, kerosene and heating oil consumption may be attributed to this. The cause of the increase for which the private sector is responsible is the increase in the number of private cars, which has brought about an increase in the consumption of gasoline and kerosene.

The Solution?

Naturally it is not enough for us just to look at figures on increased oil products consumption and then fall silent, or for the discussion to end with a few plasters' increase in the sales prices of some of these products every year! This will not achieve the expected goal, which is to guide or limit fuel consumption on the one hand and attain a kind of revenue source which can be used for purposes connected with the consumption of these fuels.

Coordination Is Lacking

Thus it is not enough to use price policies alone to guide energy consumption in general. The absence of a single general approach combining interconnected policies and a general approach for coordinating causes and results reduces the effectiveness of these policies. These are not conundrums or oil deposits whose interpretation requires specialists--rather, the matter does not entail more than putting some facts together to highlight the contradictions on which limits must be placed.

The papers informed us that the minister of industry had authorized a production plan whereby the al-Nasr Automobile Manufacturing Company will produce 19,000 passenger cars in 1980 as compared with about 15,000 in 1979.

Here we are not questioning the production, or the increase in production; rather, we wonder where these new cars will go and what amount of fuel they will consume, while demanding that gasoline consumption be guided.

There is another item of news whose gist is that the Egyptian market will also absorb automobiles manufactured locally if their exportation to Arab countries, which totals about 11,000 cars on the average, is stopped.

In addition, imports of automobiles, numbers of cars entering with foreigners, and economic liberalization and tourist company cars are to be allowed.

These will all need space on the capital's streets and it is clear that they will all be converging completely independently; there will be no connection between local production plans and imports on the one hand and the absorptive capacity of the streets and traffic, and the capacity to absorb the anticipated cars and automobile parking, on the other.

Therefore it is not strange that traffic jams in the capital are increasing. The new bridge, or skyway is costing the state budget millions and is meeting with more jams. This subject raises questions.

Where does the mistake itself lie?

Is it the terrific number of cars coming forth?

Or are the streets being transformed from arteries to mere capillaries?

More important than that, this massive number of cars consumes more fuel as a commodity for operating cars, firstly, then as exhaust which goes to waste during long stops at traffic lights or in slow movement on streets which are clogged and crowded most hours of the night and day.

In summary, the burden of guiding gasoline consumption lies not only on increased gasoline prices--because such an increase may not have significant effects on the inflexible demand which distinguishes the commodity of gasoline--but rather on the government agencies which are responsible for traffic and the flow of automobiles on the roads and must also help organize the guidance process, as well as agencies responsible for facilitating imports. The former must prevent the streets from turning into garages and parking places obstructing traffic, which in any event is reflected in gasoline consumption, which increases while growth and guidance vanish.

Bottled Butane--a Final or Intermediary Commodity?

The second product which may be considered a blatant example of poor energy consumption is bottled butane, whose consumption is increasing at high rates; local consumption rose from 154,000 tons in 1973 to 339,000 tons in 1979. It is expected that this consumption will rise to 400,000 tons in 1980 and 585,000 tons in 1983. The general state budget will bear the subsidy burden to meet the difference between the local sales price of bottled butane and the costs of importing it; the volume of the subsidy this year is estimated at about 70 million pounds, and may rise to 104 million pounds as indicated by the latest negotiated prices. However, here we must make a distinction between two types of bottled butane--individual consumption in homes and industrial butane consumption.

No reservations exist about increasing the former type of consumption, since it is directly related to individual welfare. The latter type of consumption, that of bottled butane as an intermediate commodity, requires a moment's pause, because all small workshops, restaurants and so forth have shifted to using bottled butane for industrial purposes in view of its low price. Therefore, guiding the use of this commodity must distinguish between its various uses, by thinking of one means or another whereby bottled butane will not leak out into industrial uses or by having two prices at which the bottled butane will be offered. The first price, low and subsidized, will be for home use; here it is possible to be guided by supply coupons as a means for regulating the distribution process, of course after it has been possible to set the average reasonable volume of monthly consumption of bottled butane at for example one bottle per month in the average Egyptian family. The latter price, the free price, is that at which the butane must be sold for other than household uses.

11887

CSO: 4802

EGYPT

MASSIVE GRAIN WASTAGE REPORTED

Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 16 Jan 80 p 4

/Article by Majdi Najib: "We are Losing 600,000 Tons of Grain a Year Worth 33 Million Pounds and the Reason Is Poor Storage"/

/Text/ Would you believe that more than 600,000 tons of grain worth 33 million pounds are devoured by insects, rats and birds each year?

The reason is the granaries are unfit and the storage silos are scarce and primitive.

It is a fact that we have grain we do not use, while the whole world is now looking for rapid solutions to cope with the food crisis and anticipated famine among peoples.

Agricultural experts say that the loss is serious and is doubling every year. Existing granaries and silos must be developed and improved and a modern storage system must be constructed in all governorates. By our own hands, we are exposing our grain to ruin and are importing grain costing millions of pounds in its place.

However, is it possible to use radiation as an effective means for ridding grain and stored crops of insects and pests? The advanced nations of the world use it in their warehouses and silos and it has demonstrated a brilliant success. Why don't we use it? Does it cause extreme damage to grain and public health?

Egyptian experts stress its importance and the need to use it, although its costs are high and exorbitant. However, the poor state of the existing granaries and warehouses obstructs the process of introducing it and using it. How so?

33 Million--in Losses!

One reason for our extreme losses in grain stores, says Dr "Abd-al-Hakim Kamil, senior researcher in the Plant Protection Research Institute, is

that insects, rodents and birds exist and are widespread everywhere, in particular in neglected warehouses and granaries where the hand of sanitation has not yet arrived. These account for our major source of food; the danger of insects lies in the speed at which they reproduce and at which their numbers increase in the granaries as the years pass, devouring tremendous amounts of stored grain and remaining hidden so that the affliction may automatically pass to fresh grain.

The loss in stored grain doubles every year. According to the most recent statistics, it totalled 600,000 tons of grain worth 33 million pounds; our total grain production and stores are estimated at 13 million tons per year.

If the percentage of loss factor in some crops is estimated, it may reach 6 percent of our stores, broken down as follows:

Three percent in losses from insects and pests.

Two and a half percent in losses from birds.

One and a half percent in losses from rodents and moisture.

The real problem lies in the fact that we store our grain output in extremely severe conditions, in primitive storehouses which are open to the air and exposed to all elements of loss, as if we were inviting the attention of insects, birds and rats to devour our food. In spite of the extreme gravity of the elements of damage, it is possible to resist them. However, existing granaries and silos obstruct every effort. The silos and granaries are concentrated in rural areas, in the middle of fields and farms rich in pests, rats and birds which feed on the stores all year long because there are no means for protection and defense in the granaries. In addition, changes in weather and continued water seepage and moisture in storage areas cause spoilage and wastage of grain.

All these factors result in extreme losses estimated at 33 million pounds per year. If part of this enormous wasted money were used to construct modern granaries and silos and to improve storage methods in existing warehouses, this loss could drop to a modest percentage.

Where Are the Granaries and Silos?

Concerning the types and locations of existing silos and granaries, Dr 'Abd-al-Hakim Kamil says, "There are three types of storehouses and silos of different sizes and equipment according to location:

"First, mud silos. These exist on the roofs of houses in rural areas and villages in governorates. They are few in number, in spite of their importance, and are not used in the optimum manner, in view of their modest shapes and resources. However, if they are improved and promoted, they will help maintain a large portion of the small peasants' production and grain stores.

"Second, rural silos. These are distributed among some central Agricultural Credit Bank granaries in the governorates of Lower Egypt. However, they are few in number and modest. There are 2,800 small silos, each with a capacity of 100 ardebbs of grain. After certain procedures are carried out and agreement is reached with the bank supervisors, it will be possible to improve and develop the bases for storage so that these silos will play the part demanded of them.

"Third, the silos of final destination, of which there are just two in Egypt--the first, in Alexandria, receives and stores grain imported from abroad, and the second, in Cairo, receives and stores crops coming in from the governorates and from Alexandria.

"Unfortunately, however, the bases of sound storage techniques are still lacking in all types of granary and silo. Storage takes place out in the open air, the grain is exposed, and we offer it up as appetizing food for insects, rats and birds. We are traveling on a road opposite to the one the advanced countries of the world are traveling as far as sound ways and means of storage are concerned.

Traditional Resistance--A Temporary Solution!

But is there a temporary solution for saving what can be saved so losses do not double?

Dr 'Abd-al Hakim Kamil answers by stating, "There is a temporary solution for restricting these blatant losses by using and intensifying traditional means of resistance, most important of which are:

"1. As regards insects and pests, resistance takes the form of cleansing storage areas before new crops and grain come in, inspecting them periodically while they are stored, using proper sprays at periodic intervals, and cleaning out and removing the affected grain so that the contagion does not spread to the healthy grain. However, it is necessary to point out that the process of eliminating the pests and insects is to be considered impossible in view of their rapid proliferation and spread; it is possible only to limit their seriousness.

"2. Rodents: The most important of these are rats, and it is possible to eliminate them by using the methods used in resisting insects while promoting the use of poisons.

"3. Birds: By using nets and covers to cover up the exposed grain until closed storehouses and silos are built."

Is it possible, though, to use radiation as an effective means of resistance in the existing warehouses? Radiation is considered an important means of resistance and yields good results, but it is exorbitantly expensive and cannot be used in existing storage facilities. Storage equipment

must be improved and modified before it is used. It can yield brilliant results on the crops and grain imported from abroad before they are brought in and stored in the Alexandria and Cairo silos.

Guidance of Storage Is an Absolute Necessity

What, now, is a comprehensive solution? Dr 'Abd-al-Hakim Kamil adds that a comprehensive solution to the problem of losses in grain and stored crops would concentrate on guiding storage equipment and elements, most important of which are:

1. Pursuit of the necessary sanitary procedures in the storehouses, depots and granaries so that contagion will not spread from old stored crops to new ones.
2. Implementing projects for sound storage methods and establishing a modern system of silos and granaries covering all governorates, so that it will be possible to overcome the problem of grain wastage by birds, reduce the dangers arising from grain wastage by rodents and rats, and draw up a fixed prevention policy through which it will be possible to limit the problem of increasing crop losses resulting from affliction by insects and pests.
3. Promoting the construction of mud silos among small farmers in order to preserve the bulk of production.
4. Establishing a pilot project for storing grain over a whole village by using modern methods which can be introduced in a suitable fashion.
5. Training grain storage workers on sound modern bases in storage methods used in advanced countries.
6. Establishing specialized agencies to oversee crop and grain protection and maintenance operations during storage.

Radiation--And Its Effects!

To what extent, however, has the use of means of resistance through radiation succeeded?

Dr Hamid Rushdi al-Qadi, director of the National Radiation Research and Technology Center, says that now that the problem of the threat by pests to stored has become serious, accounting as it does for 50 percent of the loss factor, it is necessary to direct efforts in Egypt toward the discovery of some other resistance methods, most important of which is radiation, which is used in certain advanced countries. In the early 1950's study of the use of radiation as a means for resisting pests which afflict stored grain by lethal doses began in those countries.

Radiation--And Public Health!

In Egypt, numerous studies were made to ascertain the extent to which radiation has been successful as an effective means for combating pests in stored grain and its effect on the pests themselves, on the grain and its characteristics, and on the public health of the millions of people who will eat radiation-treated grain. The studies have proved:

With respect to the effect on public health, research carried out on some animals, such as rabbits, rats and poultry, have proved that radiation constitutes no risk to public health when people eat grain treated by radiation.

Now, shall we let the problem become aggravated as the years go by, so that solving it will become difficult, or shall we take hold of the matter and look for ways for carrying out recommended temporary comprehensive solutions rapidly? What is desired is that a modern system of closed granaries and silos be built in all governorates. Perhaps building them will cost several million pounds, but losses are increasing annually and will reach 100 million pounds in a few years!

11887

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DIPLOMAT RECOUNTS HIS ROLE IN 1952 REVOLUTION

Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 18 Jan 80 p 28

/Interview with Mahmud 'Abbas 'Abd al-Hadi, Ambassador to Panama, by Najibah Husayn: "Our New Ambassador to Panama Talks about Delicate Moments on the Night of 23 July 1952"/

/Text/ The person I interviewed was Mahmud 'Abbas 'Abd-al-Hadi, our ambassador to Panama, a graduate of the War College in 1949 and one of the heroic self-sacrificing soldiers who went forth on the great night to create the 23 July Revolution. At that time, he was a first lieutenant and his emergence that night was the beginning of a mission of self-sacrifice for the Egyptian motherland.

His role in the 23 July Revolution was the beginning of my conversation with him:

He said, "I am the junior officer to whom President Anwar al-Sadat referred in his speech on the 23 July Revolution and the events of that revolution. Yes, I am the officer who prevented his excellency the president from going out that evening, and here is the story from the beginning:

"The events of it will never be absent from my thoughts and memory. They live with me, and the more I remember and refer to them, the more I feel the power of the almighty blessed creator, because fate alone intervenes to protect us and make our plans succeed. I was in a cell of Free Officers, and before the night of 23 July we, and President Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir and 'Abd-al-Latif al-Baghdadi, met. The real revolution was launched from Huckstep /Air Base/; we were the first seven cavalry officers from Motorized Cavalry Battalion 1. We began advancing from Huckstep; Haydar Pasha was informed of our movement, and he in turn informed the palace and the king. By that time our movement had reached al-Harbi, and there I found Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir, whom we met by mistake; his presence there was also a mistake.

"Didn't I tell you that that is fate? The important thing is that we all proceeded from al-Karbi and headed toward al-Qubbah Bridge. There we met

K-13 and just one other group. When we arrived we found the al-Qubba Bridge area empty; no one was there but us. At first we thought that the king and Haydar had managed to foil the revolutionary movement, but we learned that they had informed the unit commanders through army chief of staff Maj Gen Husayn Farid to head toward the units, repress the movement and foil the revolution; at that point, instructions were issued to keep the units from returning to their other units, then other instructions were issued for all unit commanders to be arrested swiftly. We managed to arrest 14 of the unit commanders whom Husayn Farid had instructed to head for their barracks in order to put down the Free Officers' revolution."

He fell silent briefly, collecting his memories of the night which created grave events in the Arab lands and changed whole peoples. Then he went on to say:

"We stopped at the al-Qubba Bridge, waiting for instructions to attack immediately. While we were awaiting new instructions, President Muhammad Anwar al-Sadat came to the bridge, asked us about our mission and learned what we were doing. However, I prevented him from passing because he was a unit commander. He told me, 'Son, I am one of them.' During the discussion, President Anwar heard the voice of Field Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir. He called 'Ab-al-Hakim in a loud voice and told him, 'I am Anwar, Hakim, and Mahmud is refusing to let me pass.'

"The important thing is that President al-Sadat went to President 'Abd-al-Nasir and Marshal 'Abd-al-Hakim 'Amir and we began attacking the Army Bureau first. In the course of our advance we met up with movements coming from the Military Hospital. At the beginning we imagined that they were countermovements but then realized that they were with us. However, all the movements were delayed half an hour beyond the stipulated time and, if fate had not intervened at many stages of the revolution, it would not have succeeded--in fact, if we had moved in accordance with the old instructions we would absolutely not have been able to move out of Huckstep at all.

"After the attack on the Army Bureau succeeded, and after we arrested Husayn Farid, President Anwar al-Sadat took charge of broadcasting the revolution's first statement after all the telephone equipment had been taken over.

"On 24 July we learned that Faruq had assigned some people in the court to cause sabotage in the British Embassy so that Britain would intervene and put an end to the officers' movement. Therefore we sent out two groups:

"The first, headed by President al-Sadat, to arrest Imam Ibrahim.

"The second, which I was part of, to arrest 'Abd-al-Munsif Mahmud.

"We agreed that the group which finished its mission first would help the other. In fact, ours was the mission which finished first, and we joined

President al-Sadat's group. The moments were fraught with suspense and the days were full of anxiety and wariness. We spent 72 hours of unremitting work, whose pressure was mostly on our nerves because all that concerned us was that this revolution should be a success. On 26 July, when the last ruler of the Ottoman State left Egypt, we were all delighted with the dawning of freedom after 3 continuous centuries of Ottoman occupation and 74 years of British occupation."

I asked him, "How did you change from a military man to a diplomat?" He said,

"After the July Revolution I transferred to the Republican Guard, then the Military Police. From 1960 to 1963 I was military attache in Czechoslovakia. The relations between Czechoslovakia and us were not as they should have been because of Communist intervention in the Arab countries.

"In 1964 I moved from the War Ministry to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by republican decree. I spent 2 years in the Eastern European Bureau, in view of the expertise I had obtained during my work as a military attache.

"In 1966 I went to Burundi as charge d'affaires for a period of 3 years, that is, to 1969. Burundi is 2 degrees south of the equator on Lake Tanganyika. Its weather is an eternal spring all year round.

"The fact is that the Burundi people like Egyptians very much. A coup d'etat occurred which toppled the king and we were the first government to recognize the new regime, in accordance with my request. During this period we managed to establish firm contacts and friendship between the Burundi and Egyptian peoples. The royal regime was subservient to Belgian influence; when the revolution took place the Burundi people finally rid themselves of imperialism and these people are grateful to us for our early recognition of the revolution. We established an exhibit of Egyptian industries in Burundi which met with great success and that was the start of commercial relations which began to grow between us and them."

Mrs Nadiyah 'Uthman, wife of the ambassador, went on to talk about her reminiscences of Czechoslovakia, Burundi and Algeria, stating:

"They imagined that Egyptian women were still wearing veils and that we were still using camels as a means of transport in Egypt. The propaganda at that distant time was unfavorable to Egypt and the Egyptian people. One of the people present at a diplomatic reception asked me how Egyptian women could ride a camel while wearing these costumes.

"Our ambassador, Dr Kamel, handled the response, stating 'How can you be a diplomat when you have not read about Egypt and the Egyptian people?'

"In Burundi I was asked about the veil and whether it was true that Egyptian women went to universities.

"Through the grace of God, we managed to change these notions during our stay there.

"However, I was exposed to a sad thing while I was in Burundi, caused by our Egyptian radio: during the June 1967 war I heard news from Egyptian radio and sent it to all the ministries and embassies. Most unfortunately the statements were all false, and we were surprised when movie houses showed a film on Egypt's 5 June defeat. Mahmud worked as hard as he could to prevent the showing of the film. We felt shame and dishonor, not because of defeat, because the war involved many rounds, but because of the false statements. However, in 1973, thank God, we were in Algeria and we regained credit solidly before the whole world, and I felt my defense of the war and the ability of the Egyptian army in the past in Burundi. President Anwar al-Sadat's decision made it possible to turn dreams into reality, and the October victory was a great one which made us feel pride."

Concerning the stage during which he sacrificed himself, in his period of work between 1974 and 1976, Ambassador Mahmud said,

"I was appointed minister plenipotentiary to Algeria. Egyptian-Algerian relations were normal and good. In the days of the 1973 war Algeria was on the alert and the echo of the Egyptian army's victory was splendid for us all. The radio broadcast the news bulletins to us before the end-of-day cannon as a kind of appetizer. Really, we were very happy, but they became very angry when they heard of the cease fire. Even though we explained it, they did not understand this position; however, after the description and justifications we offered this position fundamentally persuaded them.

"In that period Egypt played a pioneering role which was in keeping with its Arab nationalism. It mediated between Algeria and Morocco in the dispute. Vice President Husni Mubarak reached us and stayed about 1 week in Algiers, going from Algeria and Morocco in the manner of shuttle negotiations until we managed to reconcile Algeria and Morocco. Matters actually calmed down, by stages, at that time.

"After I returned from Algeria I was appointed ambassador and in 1979 a decree was issued appointing me Egyptian ambassador to Panama. Now here I am preparing to travel, and in a few days I will travel to Panama."

Through Ambassador Mahmud 'Abbas' mission of sacrifice, I truly felt that Egypt will always remain the pioneer. With the torch of its freedom on the night of July 23, it illuminated Arab and African lands.

11837
CSO: 4802

CAIRO BRACES FOR INVASION OF WHITE ANTS

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 18 Jan 80 p 6

/Article by Muhammad Isma'il: "White Ants Are Converging on Cairo: 253 Villages Are Afflicted and the Losses Are 10 Million Pounds per Year"/

/Text/ The threat of white ants is approaching Cairo and the towns of Lower Egypt. The ants attack old furniture and eat away at the foundations of delapidated houses. The Ministry of Agriculture is announcing a state of emergency and forming a number of committees comprising professors from agricultural faculties and the Scientific Research Academy to cope with the threat of the ants and prepare practical experiments for doing away with it immediately.

Eng 'Abd-al-Latif 'Isa, first undersecretary of the ministry, and Dr Ahmad Husni al-Kashif, dean of sciences at 'Ayn Shams, emphasized that the ants have reached Cairo but in small numbers which do not constitute a threat. However, a threat could arise if the ants reach farmland and new towns.

Scientific Research Academy officials and technicians state that the danger of the white ants may become critical in the rural areas, in Upper Egypt particularly, and that it is necessary to cope with it and eliminate it in view of the danger it constitutes to people's economic and social life.

253 Villages Afflicted

The most recent tabulation by Dr 'Ali Hasanayn al-Humaysi, director of the White Ant Research Section in the Plant Protection Institute at the Ministry of Agriculture, contained a comprehensive survey of the areas afflicted with a threat from white ants. The total villages afflicted with white ants in Egypt are about 253 in number, 161 of which are in the governorates of Upper Egypt alone.

Aswan is the governorate most afflicted with this insect, since the ants have attacked 35 of the governorate's villages, followed by the Governorate of al-Sharqiyah in Lower Egypt, where the onslaughts of white ants have spread through 33 villages. Then there is al-Jizah, where 30 villages have

been attacked, the New Valley, which has 28 villages afflicted, Asyut with 21 affected villages, Qina with 13 afflicted villages, al-Minufiyah with two villages, and the Red Sea, Matruh, Sinai and the other governorates with one village each.

The Ants Attack Plants

The study also pointed out that the white ants' attacks are not concentrated only on wood and household furnishings in the areas affected. They also extend to the destruction of plants.

Afflictions have been observed in sesame plants in Luxor, peanuts in Idfu, olives in Marsa Matruh, and in date palm, lemon, citrus, sugar cane, mulberry and acacia trees.

Financial Losses

The study by Eng William 'Ayyed, assistant instructor at the Agricultural Research Center--the first study on the problem of white ants and their serious effect on the Egyptian countryside--points out that the volume of the losses caused by white ants in the rural sector alone have come to about 10 million pounds a year during the comprehensive survey period, while the Ministry of Agriculture allocated the sum of 80,000 pounds last year to cope with this noxious bug; 24,000 pounds of this were spent on Aswan alone. These credits, as the study and comprehensive survey program state, did not result in the eradication of this insect.

Greater attention should be given actually to confronting the onslaughts of white ants, because it is a national problem which requires that all efforts be consolidated.

Massive Efforts

Dr 'Abd-al-Latif 'Isa, first undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, says that efforts to resist the noxious insect, known by the name of al-Qardah, took place successfully at the end of last year and 350 out of 358 afflicted houses were treated in Aswan, and 250 out of a total of 300 affected houses in Kawn Umbu, al-Ja'afirah and Faris.

Also, more than 70 percent of the afflicted houses in Idfu, al-Tarfan, and al Hajir, 1,494 in number, and about 80 percent of the houses afflicted in the Districts of Nasir and Kalabishah, 1,658 in number, were treated.

Practical Solutions

Because the threat from white ants and their onslaughts on pests, crops and plants are well known, officials in the Ministry of Health, experts from the Agricultural Research Center and scientific research experts have not

been standing with their hands tied in the face of the onslaughts. Rather, through study and analysis, successful treatment was arrived at for scientifically and seriously confronting this problem.

Dr Muhammad Mahmud Husni, chief of the Plant Protection Section in the Agricultural Faculty at 'Ayn Shams, says that preventive measures must begin directly after the foundation of any new building is dug by treating this foundation with a pesticide whose effectiveness has been established for a long period, thus turning it into an insecticide barrier or insulator underneath the building, so that it will be difficult for this pest to penetrate this barrier to reach the sources of nutrition in the building.

This experiment has succeeded noticeably in countries where this insect lives, such as America, Nigeria and South Africa.

Insecticides First of All

Dr 'Abd-al-Latif 'Isa, first undersecretary of agriculture, states that it is necessary to treat the soil of the building or agricultural land chemically with the necessary insecticides before starting to build or farm and to use aluminum in building.

The undersecretary of agriculture said that he sent Eng Mustafa al-Hifnawi, minister of housing, and Eng Hasballah al-Kafrawi, minister of development and new communities, a recommendation that these remedies be carried out and aluminum used in construction, especially in reconstruction of the flooded villages in Qina and Aswan and in the new town housing and development plan. The problem has massive economic and social dimensions and a comfortable life must be assured for the inhabitants of these communities by eliminating the white ant.

11887

CSO: 4802

BRIEFS

SOCIALIST PROSECUTOR RESTRICTED--AL-AHRAH's correspondent has learned that the draft law on the socialist public prosecutor and political responsibility which will soon be presented to the People's Assembly stipulates that the socialist public prosecutor's powers are to be restricted to investigating acts of a political character infringing on the security of the state and citizens, citizens' rights, national unity and social peace and to investigating acts infringing on the people's rights, and that activities of the prosecutor's agency will be restricted to political investigation. The prosecutor will have no involvement with criminal or administrative investigation; therefore there will be no overlapping of the activities of the socialist prosecutor and the judiciary and the prosecutor will not deprive the ordinary judiciary of any functions. The draft of the law also stipulates that if any charge is established through the prosecutor's investigation, the accused will be transferred to the caretaker court for trial and the court will impose penalties in the form of "measures" instead of punishment on the accused; that is, the accused will for example be stripped of his political rights or prevented from presenting himself as a candidate for people's assemblies or elective unions. The correspondent learned that the seizure or inspection measures the prosecutor may perform will be carried out only by permission of the chief of the caretaker court and that the caretaker court will be made up of two elements, one judiciary and the other popular, from People's Assembly members. /Text/ /Cairo AL-AHRAH in Arabic 19 Jan 80 p 1/ 11887

CSO: 4802

UNEMPLOYED PREDICTED TO REACH 70,000

Jerusalem JERUSALEM POST in English 12 Feb 80 p 3

[Article by Benny Morris]

[Text] The number of unemployed will grow in the course of this year from 50,000 to 60,000 or 70,000, Labor Minister Dr Israel Katz said yesterday. He added that the 50,000 figure reached at the end of the fourth quarter of 1979 represented a 60 percent rise over the number reached in mid-1979.

The 60,000-70,000 figure predicted for this year will constitute a 4.5 percent unemployment rate.

Katz said that there would be a demand for some 15-18,000 new workers in industry and commerce. But the economic planners hope to reduce the number of those employed in service industries by 10,000, and another 25,000-30,000 potential workers will join the labor force after completing army service. Thus some 20,000 new unemployed are likely to join the present 50,000 unemployed.

Katz expressed the hope that some of the old and new unemployed would be absorbed in export-gearred industries. He said that this would necessitate an expansion of existing vocational training and re-training facilities involving an outlay of at least IL500m.

The minister told THE JERUSALEM POST last night, however, that he expected a certain increase of workers in the defense and construction industries, "especially in the Negev," and that this might reduce the overall number of unemployed predicted for 1980.

Labor Ministry director general Israel Goralnik yesterday said that the vocational training centers were "full to the bursting point" and that hundreds of applicants were "knocking at the gates."

Baruch Haklai, head of the Employment Service, said that the number of Arabs from the administered territories officially employed in Israel had declined over the past few months from 53,000-47,000.

ISRAEL

BRIEFS

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES RISE—An estimate by the employment service made over the last 2 weeks indicates that 31,000 Israelis are seeking work today. This is a rise of 20 percent as compared with last month. The data also indicates that most of the expected dismissals were in the public services sphere. [TA191939 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 18 Feb 80 TA]

CSO: 4805

CURRENT STATE OF ECONOMY EXAMINED

Beirut THE ARAB WORLD WEEKLY in English 9 Feb 80 pp 3-6

[Part I of two-part review of economy and financial policies]

[Text] The Lebanese parliament has received the details of the draft budget for fiscal year 1980 which were prepared by Finance Minister Ali Khalil. The draft contains a sectoral survey of the Lebanese economy in 1979, a review of the government financial policies and finally the breakdown of budget allocations and an analysis of receipts and allocations.

In what follows are excerpts from the draft covering the larger part of Minister Khalil's sectoral survey, a survey of the remaining sectors will follow in the next issue of the ARAB WORLD WEEKLY along with a review of financial policies and a breakdown of allocations:

Statistics relating to the Lebanese economy's performance in 1979 as well as for the whole post war period have been consistently described as hardly reliable, except perhaps statistics on the banking sector. Despite the persistence of a general atmosphere of insecurity with tension along the frontlines with the absence of serious armed clashes the Lebanese economy has made significant progress which is certainly more than what was done on the political arena.

The Private Sector Leads: Although the larger share of the damage during the war were sustained by the private sector this sector continued after the war to play the major role in the economy regaining a substantial part of its productive capacity that was frozen and heavily damaged during the war years.

This vitality of the private sector was made more explicit in two sectors: The first was the manufacturing sector where work progressed in spite of the damage, recalling that the industrial sector, second only to commerce sustained the larger part of the 1975-76 material loss.

Although pre-war levels were not attained the industrial sector continued to recover slowly but steadily and most of the markets for Lebanese industrial exports were recovered.

The financial sector, on the other hand, made remarkable progress since 1976 as indicated by the size of deposits and credit extended. Deposits rose from LL 8.2 billion in 1974 to LL 14 billion in 1978, 70 percent growth in four years.

Credit extended to the private sector on the other hand rose from LL 4.8 billion in 1974 to LL 10 billion in 1978, a 108 percent increase. Considering the high rate of inflation, the increase would still be of a very high order.

Factors hampering economic recovery were numerous. Among them: High rates of inflation, acute shortages in skilled workers, housing problems, lack of specialised investments. Rapid remedies should be found to all these problems.

To assess the rate of recovery in the various sectors a survey of major indicators is necessary. Estimates of GNP for 1977 and 1978 reveal that in monetary terms (at current prices) GNP in 1977 reached LL 10,360 million and dropped back to LL 9,840 million in 1978. Net foreign reserves with banks which were at LL 5,758 million in 1974 rose to LL 9,021 million in 1977 and LL 9,550 million in 1978. Total exports increased to LL 2,355 million in 1977 and dropped to LL 1,931 million in 1978.

Accurate statistics on the Lebanese economy have ceased to exist ever since the Direction Central des Statistiques stopped operating as an institution during the war. However, there are several indicators that could give a more or less clear image of what has been achieved in the various sectors.

Customs Receipts: Before analysing sectoral performance and recovery it should be mentioned that customs receipts in the first nine months of 1979 reached LL 85,673,194. These originated from four official ports (those of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidan and Jounieh), from Mashaa on the Syrian-Lebanese borders and the International Airport of Beirut. Highest receipts were collected at the Port of Beirut and amounted to LL 210 million followed by the Beirut Airport where receipts amounted to LL 106 million for the same period.

Customs receipts in the corresponding period of 1978 amounted to LL 442 million despite the effect of the summer clashes between right-wing militias and the Syrian troops of the ADF that year. Average monthly receipts amounted to LL 35.9 million in 1979 (first three quarters) compared to LL 46 million in the corresponding period of 1978.

Sectoral Survey; Industry: Direct losses incurred by the manufacturing sector during the war were estimated at LL 700 million while indirect losses exceeded LL 2 billion. Production and capacities were subject to successive drawbacks. Output fluctuated sharply, rising to 80 percent of 1974 levels and falling back to 30 percent of that year's level.

But there were also structural changes in the industrial sector covering production systems, labour, and state policy in dealing with industrialists.

Among the main indicators in the industrial sector were the following: The first is that Lebanese industrialists still have the determination to start again and the confidence in Lebanon despite the impact of the war. Instead a new breed of industrialists seeking opportunities to start their ventures came into existence.

In 1978, the General Directorate of Industry gave 64 licences for new industrial plant with total capital of LL 239 million. When actually built these plants will employ 1975 workers. Not all the plants are expected to be built soon of course but it is really remarkable that 40 of the 46 licenced plants have started implementing their projects.

They include a grain mill, mineral water bottling plants, carpet plants, gas bottling plant, oxygen and acetylene plant, fruit juice plant.

The other encouraging indicator in the industrial sector is in exports. Whenever a relatively long period of calm is felt industrial exports recover rapidly. In the first four months of 1979 industrial exports amounted to LL 234 million compared with LL 186 million in 1974.

From available data it can be seen that industrial exports were higher in the first four months period of all post war years than they were valued at in 1974 (except in 1977). Of course changes in the level of prices should be accounted for.

Periods of clashes and lack of calm and security in which industrial production dropped were normally followed by a significant increase in industrial production when relative calm was restored. This shows that the industrial sector is still capable of producing significantly high levels of output.

Dispersed Industries: Yet another indicator is the dispersion of Lebanese industries in nontraditional locations. Some 40 industrial establishments operating at present were built in relatively safer regions than where they originally stood. A large part of these were scattered in Naama, Jieyyeh, Nahr Ibrahim, Bbayeh and other coastal towns while still others were built in the Bekaa.

In the first quarter of 1979 the General Directorate of Industry gave 30 licences for plants with total capital of LL 118 million.

Industrial Exports: The Arab countries are still the main markets for Lebanese industrial exports. In 1978 exports to Saudi Arabia amounted to LL 60 million, to Iraq 21 million, to Jordan LL 14 million, to Syria LL 7 million and the four countries imported 91 percent of total Lebanese industrial exports.

As for the classification of exports chemical industries still topped the list. The value of chemical exports amounted to LL 13.3 million. Nonmetallurgical minerals followed with exports of LL 12.8 million, cement exports were in third position of importance and were valued at LL 11.4 million.

Electric Power Production: Lebanon has a daily shortage of 500,000 Kwh. The shortage is expected to rise further to 1 million Kwh, 18 percent of total consumption. In 1974 Lebanon power production capacity was 320 Megawatt of which Syria was given 30 Megawatt. In the same year Electricite du Liban ordered four thermal generators for its plant in Zouk. The generators were to provide 120 Megawatts. The generators were not delivered on schedule and had they been received the shortage would have been easy to fill by only two of the four thermal units.

Continued costly maintenance of the four generators made the state company discontinue using them. The producing company, Westinghouse was sued. The shortage in electric power is the result of the war, had no fighting taken place Electricite du Liban could have increased capacity 200 Megawatt as a result of the state deal approved on 5/3/1976.

There were other plans to connect Lebanon's power network with the Syrian grid, especially the Euphrates network but this did happen as a result of the war. Had the linkage been made Lebanon would have been able to produce 356 Megawatts more.

In the light of increases in consumption Lebanon needs 400 Megawatts of additional electric power as well as 120 Megawatts that can be received from Syria as reserve supply. Electricite du Liban may be able to override the effects of the war next year. This may be possible since 30 Megawatts will be received through the partial linkage with Syria in the North and the 66 Megawatts that could be produced from the Jiyah thermal plant after its recent installation.

Fuels: The Tripoli refinery as is well known secures 70 percent of the Lebanese market since its nationalisation while the Zahraní refinery provides the rest. In 1974 the two refineries could handle 17 million barrels but in 1977 the amount of gasoline handled dropped to 13.5 million barrels. This continued until 1978 when fuel production reached 1,772 million litres.

Referring to 1974 production levels we could say that the Tripoli; and Sidon refineries have operated at 47 and 65 percent of that year's level.

a marked drop in diesel consumption was felt in the period after the war which was largely the result of increasing dependence on electric power by industrial plant.

REPORT ON PROBLEMS, DEPLOYMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS

Beirut THE ARAB WORLD WEEKLY in English 9 Feb 80 pp 16-18

[Text] For the second consecutive week, the Lebanese government has taken a firm position on questions which, recently, Lebanese statemanship thought were better left undecided. Last week, the Lebanese cabinet issued a communique expressing its members' disapproval of the attacks directed by PLO leader Yasser Arafat against the State; the first such official stand taken ever since President Elias Sarkis came to power, against the Palestinian resistance.

The second stand came this week in the Cabinet statement issued on the Syrian decision to withdraw its forces from Beirut and its suburbs. The Lebanese State announced its decision to deploy the Lebanese Army in all positions that the Syrian forces would withdraw from, regardless of the fact that this army's deployment is rejected by some and obstructed by others.

The decision drew sharp reaction from the Palestinian resistance and from the leftists and led speculations that political escalation may increase between Lebanon and Syria.

The Cabinet Decision. In its statement issued on February 6th, the Lebanese cabinet decided:

- 1) To ask the Lebanese Army to take the immediate measures in order to fill any void on the security level, namely on the demarcation lines, in vital installations as well as all government institutions and administrations.
- 2) To reject any armed presence other than that of the legal forces which are the Lebanese Army, the ADF and the ISF.
- 3) To instruct those three forces to work out a "comprehensive security plan" aimed at reestablishing the authority of the State in all parts of the country. The plan, the statement said, would give the Army and the

ADF an "effective role" in backing the Internal Security Forces, and it should lead toward a takeover of security duties by those three forces in the areas where no "legal armed forces" exist at the present stage.

The Cabinet statement said that the plan should give "implementation priority" to the coastal road stretching between Tripoli in the North and Tyre in the South, passing through the "commercial center of [as printed]

The statement also expressed the Cabinet's appreciation of "the role that has been and continues to be played by our sister state, Syria, within the framework of the ADF, towards the consolidation of security in Lebanon and the consecration of legal authority in all Lebanese regions."

The statement, in fact, included two unusual statements of position: one was its decision to deploy the Army wherever the Syrian forces would pull out and the other was its rejection of any armed presence in Lebanon other than that of the three "legal" security agencies that are the Army, the ISF and the ADF.

Consequences. Whatever the intentions of the Lebanese Government, the first and main consequence of the statement was that Syria, without announcing it, changed its withdrawal plan into a "regrouping" plan and was reported to have decided to postpone the process still further, apparently to allow the Lebanese Government time to take additional measures.

In fact, most observers agreed that by announcing its decision, the Lebanese Government did not actually intend to deploy the Army, but to freeze the Syrian decision to pull out forces from Beirut and its suburbs. The freeze of the Syrian decision was what actually happened but, officially, it did not come as the result of the Lebanese statement, but in reply to the repeated appeals made by various Lebanese leftist sides on the Syrians to maintain the ADF in Beirut.

The official reasons given by Syrian authorities to the Lebanese officials who enquired on the reasons for the withdrawal decision, were on the one hand that Syria feared an Israeli attack against its forces in Lebanon, and, on the other hand, that Syria was opposed to letting its forces play anymore a police role in Lebanon, manning checkpoints, etc. But the Syrian media and pro-Syrian groups and movements in Lebanon attributed the responsibility for the Syrian decision to the attitude of the Lebanese state which was charged with irresponsibility, lack of decision and strength and a tendency to play the game of the Lebanese Front.

On the other hand, reports said that the Syrian authorities have reportedly instructed the Palestinian resistance and the National Movement

forces to take over the positions that the Syrian forces will evacuate; including positions located in the generally rightwing-controlled area of the country. It was first expected that the rivalry between the various groups over the positions would lead to clashes among them, but informed sources later said that the Syrian authorities had drawn up a map allotting to each side the positions it was to take over after the Syrians.

Divisions. The developments witnessed on the Lebanese scene over the past two weeks have reportedly led to divisions in the leaderships of the main parties and organizations concerned, namely, the Lebanese Front, the National Movement and the Palestinian organizations.

As far as the Lebanese Front is concerned, the leadership is divided over whether the Syrian decision and its consequences will lead to a resumption of hostilities in Lebanon, as was the case in 1975. They are also reported to differ on whether the militias should be placed in a state of alert. Lebanese Front leader Camille Chamoun recently made a declaration where he sought to reassure the Moslem population of Lebanon that arms will not be taken up against it, and he also called on the Palestinians not to feel "persecuted." On the other hand, informed sources reported that contacts--secret contacts--have taken place between representatives of the National Liberal Party of Mr Chamoun and the main PLO organization, Fatah, while similar contacts were conducted between the Phalangist Party and the Independent Nasserite Movement (Mourabitoun): the purpose of the talks was to find ways to avert a new recurrence of violence in the country.

The PLO is said to have been placed in an uneasy position by the Syrian decision. The Palestinian leadership does not need to fight anymore to make its cause heard in the world. It does not want to be left alone in charge of security duties, first because this may lead to clashes and second because this mission would divert its attention from South Lebanon, which is much more important to it than Beirut. Unwilling to get involved again in what they call the quicksands of the Lebanese crisis, the PLO leadership find themselves unwilling to assume the mission dictated by Damascus, and unable to turn their backs on Syria.

The National Movement's divisions have been aggravated by the developments, especially insofar as Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumlat is concerned. One of the most moderate members of the National Movement, he was reported to be determined to quit the National Movement if the latter opposed the deployment of the Lebanese Army in Beirut. He did not attend the joint PLO-National Movement meeting which issued a communique disapproving the Lebanese Cabinet's decision. However, observers said that pressure were put to bear upon him to persuade him not to withdraw from the National Movement.

Attention is now focused on the efforts that are being deployed toward a Lebanese-Syrian summit meeting, described by many as the only way to settle the Lebanese-Syrian crisis and to allow for national accord among the Lebanese. But progress is very slow.

LEADER OF SYRIAN BA'TH PARTY COMMENTS ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL

Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English 11-17 Feb 80 pp 20-24

[Article by 'Asim Qansuh, head of Syrian Ba'th Party]

[Text]

The leader of the Lebanese branch of the Syrian Baath Party, Assem Kanso, told *Monday Morning* last week that Syria was under no obligation to consult the Lebanese authorities before taking a decision to withdraw its forces from Beirut or Lebanon.

"The (Syrian) Arab Deterrent Forces entered Lebanon by a Syrian Arab decision, and their withdrawal will remain a Syrian decision, because that is dictated by Syria's national security," Kanso said.

He was answering those who have criticized Syria's sudden decision last Sunday, Feb. 3, to pull its troops out of Beirut with no prior notice to President Elias Sarkis, whom the Arab League recognizes as the commander of the ADF.

Kanso said the President had for four years refused to use the ADF to bring the illegal militias of the Phalangist and National Liberal parties (Lebanese Front) under control, and had even refused to give the Syrian troops permission to defend themselves when they came under attack from those militias.

"When they tried to (defend themselves)," he said, "he submitted his resignation... and then he took decisions which allowed the Phalangist and National Liberal gangs to continue their conspiratorial activities and their coordination with Israel, and he ignored all the decisions arrived at in the bilateral summits between him and (Syrian) President Hafez Assad, not to mention the resolutions of the Arab summits in Riyadh, Cairo and Tunis."

Kanso said the Syrian decision to withdraw the ADF troops from Beirut and regroup them elsewhere in Lebanon was prompted mainly by "definite information" that Israel was preparing a military attack on Syria through Lebanon, but he confirmed that the decision was also "political" in nature.

Charging that the Lebanese State had come under the total control of the rightist Lebanese Front, he noted:

- That the Lebanese authorities had never once taken action to stop the rightist slander campaign against the Syrian troops in Lebanon;

- That the Lebanese authorities, while discussing with Arab officials the way in which the resolutions of the Tunis Arab summit can be implemented in Lebanon, had turned "surreptitiously to the rest of the world, seeking its participation in the settlement of the Lebanese crisis";

- That the Lebanese authorities had accepted the domination of the United States, as evidenced by their adoption of the U.S. position on South Lebanon as relayed to them by U.S. special envoy Philip Habib last year, and by the positions they adopted on the Afghanistan issue at the U.N. General Assembly and the Islamabad conference of Islamic foreign ministers last month.

The spokesman of the Syrian Baath Party in Lebanon said that although Damascus had postponed the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Beirut and its suburbs on the request of the Lebanese authorities, it could not put it off any longer, and the ball was now in the Lebanese State's park.

The Lebanese authorities must "move from this stage, in which they have been dealing with the crisis verbally, to the stage of action - of the adoption of decisive positions and decisions, free from the blackmail of the Lebanese Front, which has been imposing its wishes on the Lebanese authorities."

One official reaction to the withdrawal which would be totally unacceptable would be the replacement of the Syrian troops with the Lebanese Army, which is "un-nationalistic" and "sectarian," Kanso said, pledging to "confront" any Army deployment along the "green line" between East and West Beirut "by all means."

He said that the Palestine Liberation Army units would withdraw with the ADF, and that the militias of the leftist National Movement were capable of protecting West Beirut and maintaining order in it. They were ready to do everything in their power to help Lebanon's police forces fill the security vacuum that would be left by the ADF-PLA withdrawal, he said.

Conceding that this arrangement could lead to a resumption of the Lebanese civil war, Kanso said: "The responsibility in that event must be borne by the State... The State has hesitated to use the legal (ADF) forces placed at its disposal to put an end to the gangs of isolationist collaborators" or to build a "nationalist, non-sectarian army capable of putting an end to insurrection and the tragedy of Lebanon."

Monday Morning's questions and Kanso's answers, provided in writing, are translated in full below:

SYRIA'S DECISION TO PULL ITS FORCES OUT OF BEIRUT AND ITS SUBURBS HAS BEEN INTERPRETED IN VARIOUS WAYS. ONE INTERPRETATION IS THAT THIS IS SYRIA'S WAY OF SIGNALING ITS DISPLEASURE WITH LEBANON'S OFFICIAL POSITIONS; ANOTHER IS THAT SYRIA NEEDS ITS FORCES TO DEAL WITH ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS; A THIRD IS THAT SYRIA IS BRACING FOR AN ISRAELI ATTACK. IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO ANY OF THESE EXPLANATIONS? AND WHY WAS THE DECISION TAKEN SO SUDDENLY, WITH NO PRIOR NOTICE TO THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES?

The decision to withdraw Syrian troops from Beirut and its suburbs was dictated by circumstances and security imperatives — mainly Israel's military preparations. The Syrian officials have definite information about an American-Israeli plan to deliver a military blow to Syria after the defeat of the United States in Iran and Afghanistan. Now that the desperate attempts to undermine Syria's steadfastness internally have failed, the plans to undermine it by external action have been revived.

The regrouping decision taken by the command of the Arab Deterrent Forces came against a background of difficult regional circumstances. It represents an attempt to confront the imperialist, Zionist conspiracy and face the challenges created by the patriotic and nationalist positions which Syria, alone, has adopted to confront the Camp David conspirators and the parties behind it. This was clear to everyone without exception, especially to those who are now claiming that the Syrian decision took them by surprise.

THE ARAB LEAGUE PLACED THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES AT THE DISPOSAL OF PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS. SINCE SYRIA ACCEPTED THE RECENT EXTENSION OF THE

ADF MANDATE ON THAT BASIS, THERE ARE SOME WHO SAY THAT THE UNILATERAL SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL DECISION IS UNJUSTIFIED. WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THIS CRITICISM?

When everyone else was holding back and conspiring against Lebanon and the Lebanese, Syria took the initiative and stopped the bloodbath in Lebanon. It took the initiative, facing the dangers, belittling the difficulties, accepting the sacrifices dictated by its nationalist and humanitarian duties... It gave (Lebanon) its unqualified, unlimited support without hesitation, asking nothing in return. President Sarkis had never dreamed he could get what Syria gave him. The Arab Deterrent Forces were placed at his disposal the moment they entered Lebanese territory. They were a military tool in his hands, but he did not know how to use them for a national accord initiative which would pave the way for a balanced settlement of the Lebanese crisis. He did not put them to use in the direction of putting an end to partition projects or in the direction of building a nationalist, non-sectarian army. On the contrary, from the day the Zionists of the interior began their attacks on the Arab Deterrent Forces, President Sarkis never took any decision to allow the Arab Deterrent Forces to defend themselves. When they tried to, he submitted his resignation... and then he took decisions which allowed the Phalangist and National Liberal gangs to continue their conspiratorial activities and their coordination with Israel, and he ignored all the decisions arrived at in the bilateral summits between him and President Hafez Assad, not to mention the resolutions of the Arab summits in Riyadh, Cairo and Tunis. What happened to the Beiteddin resolutions? What happened to the old Arab follow-up committees? Indeed, what has happened to the present Arab follow-up committee, which is working

determinedly toward the implementation of the Tunis summit resolutions, while the Lebanese State's orientation continues to be based exclusively on the unacceptable "Lebanese working paper" which was submitted to the Tunis conference?

The State, which has come under the total control of the Lebanese Front, began to turn surreptitiously to the rest of the world, seeking its participation in the settlement of the Lebanese crisis, even as consultations were going on toward the implementation of the Tunis resolutions. Talk started about ready-made military plans under which the Army would take over security duties in Beirut and its suburbs. They even went so far as to hold the Arab Deterrent Forces responsible for the non-implementation of those plans. To top it all, when some quarters started hurling criticisms and accusations at the Arab Deterrent Forces in a concentrated campaign aimed at distorting those forces' image, no attempt was made by official circles to confront this misleading, doubt-sowing campaign.

The authorities, unable to free themselves of the domination of the isolationist gangs, have gone farther than that and participated in the imperialist, Zionist-inspired plans — starting by adopting the project of (U.S. special envoy) Philip Habib, and then going on to the position they adopted on the Afghanistan issue at the U.N., and last but not least, the position they adopted on the Islamabad conference.

Furthermore, we say that the Arab Deterrent Forces entered Lebanon by a Syrian Arab decision, and their withdrawal will remain a Syrian decision, because that is dictated by Syria's national security.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO US WHAT IS BEHIND THE TIMING OF THE SYRIAN DECISION, WHICH COMES AMID TENSION IN BOTH THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH?

After the failure of American

imperialism to undermine Syria's steadfastness by instigating internal insurrection, after its failure to drag other Arab regimes into the Camp David fold, and after its defeat in Iran and Afghanistan, America's hireling, Israel, launched a desperate attempt to deliver an external blow to Syria through Lebanon, massing two battalions on the Lebanese-Israeli borders. That is what prompted the wise decision to regroup the Arab Deterrent Forces and deploy them in battle positions to improve their ability to confront the expected Israeli aggression on Lebanon and Syria.

WOULD YOU ELABORATE ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABDELHALIM KHADDAM'S RECENT STATEMENT THAT THE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL DECISION SERVES THE INTERESTS OF SYRIA AND LEBANON ALIKE?

The decision does in fact serve the interests of both Syria and Lebanon, because the aggression is (expected to be) against Syria and Lebanon, and any defense on the part of these forces will be defense of Syria and Lebanon alike. Syria's security is Lebanon's security, and vice versa. In the 1967 and 1973 war, the Beqaa represented a weak spot on the Syrian front. Now, things are different. As I told you, those forces were withdrawn from Beirut and its suburbs and regrouped in other areas for security considerations, taking into account national Arab security without overlooking Lebanese security and the need to continue the process to help this country regain its security, political and social health.

IF SYRIA'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS IS FINAL, HOW DO YOU THINK THE RESULTANT SECURITY VACUUM SHOULD BE FILLED?

The force which was supposed to replace the Arab Deterrent Forces upon their withdrawal was the Lebanese Army, but certainly not the present Lebanese Army,

in view of its structure and organization. This Army, which has been rebuilt on unnationalistic, sectarian foundations, represents part of the strategy of the forces, which are hostile to Lebanon and the Arab nation, as we have explained repeatedly.

We say we will confront and block the deployment of the Army by all means, and the authorities will be fully responsible for any such (deployment) decision.

What we want is a nationalist army capable of serving as the nation's shield, of protecting the nation from the dangers posed by the enemy. We say that every Lebanese nationalist, all the sincere people of Lebanon, must realize that the forthcoming stage will be the stage of liberating Lebanon from the treasonous gangs and hirelings which are associated with the enemy, by preserving solidarity in the nationalist area, defending it, keeping it under control, and protecting its security, giving no opportunity to those who are interested in damaging the security and stability of this country.

SHOULD THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES FAIL TO FILL THE SECURITY GAPS QUICKLY ENOUGH, DO YOU THINK THE SYRIAN AUTHORITIES WILL BE READY TO POSTPONE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES TO GIVE LEBANON'S LEGAL FORCES TIME TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR NEW DUTIES?

The decision to withdraw the Arab Deterrent Forces from Beirut is a political and military decision dictated by well-known circumstances and developments. It cannot be reversed, and it cannot be postponed longer than it already has been. The Lebanese authorities must shoulder their responsibilities and move from this stage, in which they have been dealing with the crisis verbally, to the stage of action — of the adoption of decisive positions and decisions, free from the

blackmail of the Lebanese Front, which has been imposing its wishes on the Lebanese authorities.

AS SOON AS THE NEWS OF THE SYRIAN DECISION BROKE, GUNMEN APPEARED IN THE STREETS OF THE CAPITAL AND TENSION ROSE IN VARIOUS LEBANESE REGIONS, AROUSING FEARS OF A DETONATION AND A RETURN TO HOSTILITIES. DO YOU SHARE THOSE FEARS?

Everything is possible, and I say once more that the responsibility in that event must be borne by the State, which has wasted more than one opportunity to put an end to what's going on in Lebanon. We have given much and sacrificed a great deal for the sake of security, peace and stability, but it has been useless. The State has hesitated to use the legal forces placed at its disposal to put an end to the gangs of isolationist collaborators or to reject the perpetuation of the status quo without any clear moves in the direction of building a nationalist, non-sectarian army capable of putting an end to insurrection and the tragedy of Lebanon.

The regrouping of forces does not imply that Syria is abandoning its nationalist role in Lebanon. We are prepared to shoulder our full responsibilities toward our people and our nation without hesitation, and we refuse to bargain on this.

Everyone else must also shoulder his responsibility to preserve security in the nationalist areas, which would help us in our struggle toward the achievement of our goals.

We will not tolerate any violations by anyone. The security of this area is our responsibility, and we will do everything in our power to help the Internal Security Forces, the police and Public Security do their duty toward the citizens and public institutions.

DO YOU THINK THE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL DECISION CAN BE

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD NATIONAL ACCORD, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT HAS PROMPTED PARTIES ON BOTH SIDES TO DEMAND THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE ARMY?

The first and last step toward national accord should have been taken by the State, but the State's hesitation to use the legal forces placed at its disposal has allowed all opportunities to go by. The State has been unable to make use of the past four years. It has made no progress whatsoever (toward national accord), and the only reason for this is that it is unable to make and implement any decision without the isolationist Front's leaders. National accord cannot be achieved by suspect calls from suspect parties here and there. What accord is this that they're talking about? People who boast about their collaboration with Israel are calling for accord. Accord with whom? They all demanded the deployment of the Lebanese Army to replace the Arab Deterrent Forces, but we all know what this army is and how it is put together. That kind of accord could possibly be achieved, but it would not be the required national accord.

SOME MEDIA HAVE SAID THAT UNITS OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY HAVE REPLACED THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES IN SOME POSITIONS — SOUTH OF BEIRUT, FOR INSTANCE. IS THIS TRUE, AND WOULD YOU APPROVE OF THE PLA REPLACING THE ADF?

The Palestine Liberation Army is working within the units attached to the Arab Deterrent Forces. It follows that any decision to withdraw the Arab Deterrent Forces from Beirut covers the Palestine Liberation Army as well.

DO YOU AGREE WITH THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL SYRIAN SOCIAL PARTY, ABDALLAH SAADEH, WHO HAS BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING THAT SINCE THE NEW DEFENSE

LAW HAS NOT BEEN APPLIED, THE MILITIAS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT SHOULD REPLACE THYADF WHEN IT WITHDRAWS?

The present Lebanese Army is not qualified to replace the Arab Deterrent Forces and take over their security duties. I have stated my views about this army. I have said that we will not accept it as a replacement for the ADF and will confront it by all means. The nationalist and patriotic forces in this country, supported by all the honorable Lebanese who are working for the unity and Arab identity of Lebanon, are capable of defending their nationalist areas, preserving those areas' security and blocking the efforts of all agents who are working in the direction of detonation, partition, imperialism and Zionism.

THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH IS TENSE, AND THERE ARE, AS YOU MENTIONED, REPORTS OF AN ISRAELI BUILD-UP IN THAT AREA. DO YOU EXPECT AN EXPLOSION THERE?

As I told you before, American imperialism, backed by international Zionism, is working toward the detonation of the entire region after its defeat in Iran and Afghanistan. At this stage, attention is being focused on action against Syria, which has been and remains in the forefront of those who are confronting the Camp David conspiracy through all forms of struggle. The Syrian Revolution stands as an impregnable fortress against the attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause, to push the Arab nation into the swamp of capitulation and subject it to imperialist, Zionist domination. This has been made clear by the large Israeli military concentrations on the Lebanese-Israeli borders, not to mention the savage bombardment of our villages in the South today, in addition, as I told you, to the preparations for a military strike against Syria.

REPORT ON MILITARY SITUATION IN BEIRUT

Beirut MONDAY MORNING in English 11-17 Feb 80 pp 26-32

[Article by Mona es-Said]

[Text]

The military source I talked to last week asked me not to reveal his name, and I will not. But it would take a more accomplished reporter than this one to hide his funereal mood.

"The Lebanese Army," he told me gloomily, "has never been able to deploy without the full approval of all parties concerned in any given area. And without the approval of all parties concerned in West Beirut, it cannot deploy there, and it cannot deploy between the two halves of the capital."

We were talking 24 hours after the Lebanese Cabinet announced the most controversial decision it has taken since the beginning of President Elias Sarkis' regime.

That decision, arrived at unanimously by the President, Prime Minister Selim Hoss and the ministers on Wednesday, February 6, called for deployment of the Lebanese Army along the "green line" separating East and West Beirut, in "important public facilities" (the Beirut Port and the Beirut International Airport), and around "all government institutions and administrations" on both sides of the green line.

The Cabinet also announced:

- That it rejected the presence of any armed elements anywhere in Lebanon, other than the Lebanese Army, the (Syrian) Arab Deterrent Forces (ADF), and the Lebanese police – the Internal Security Forces (ISF);

- That it was instructing those three "legal forces" to work out a comprehensive security plan for the reestablishment of Lebanese State authority in all parts of Lebanon. This plan, in which the Army and the ADF would give the ISF "effective support," would have the three forces take over security duties in the areas where no "legal armed forces" exist and would give priority to the coastal strip stretching from Tripoli in the North to Tyre in the South, passing through the commercial center of Beirut;

• That it was grateful to Syria for the peace-keeping role it had played and continued to play in Lebanon.

VIOLENT REACTION

Neither the footnote of gratitude nor the emphasis on the continuing importance of the Syrian role in Lebanon did anything to reduce the violence of leftist reaction to the Cabinet's decision.

The two leftist alliances in Lebanon, the National Movement and the National Front, came out with an unequivocal rejection of Lebanese Army presence along the green line or anywhere in West Beirut.

The National Movement, which includes the Independent Nasserite Movement (Murabetoun), the Progressive Socialist Party, the National Social Syrian Party and the Communist Party among others, had issued a formal statement rejecting the use of the Army for security duties even before the Cabinet decision was announced. The Movement, whose representatives were in constant touch with the Syrian authorities last week, demanded that any "security gaps" that may exist in the capital be filled by the ISF and pledged their militias' support for the police force in its new duties.

The National Front, which groups the Lebanese branch of the Syrian Baath Party and the Union of Working People's Forces, went one step further; Lebanon's Baath leader, Assem Kanso, declared that any Lebanese troops that were deployed along the green line or anywhere in West Beirut would have to contend with the leftist militias. *(See interview with Assem Kanso in this issue.)*

Both leftist alliances gave the same reason for rejecting the Army. The military establishment, which self-destructed during the civil war of 1975-76, had been rebuilt on unacceptable foundations, the leftists said. It was so structured as to give the Maronite community control of it, and it was designed to be heavily biased in favor of the Lebanese Front — the Phalangist-National Liberal alliance which stands, accused of anti-Arab leanings, including collaboration with Israel.

The leftists, who made their views known in shrill public statements and in meetings with Prime Minister Hoss, pointed out that a new defense law had been passed by Parliament which was aimed at restructuring the Army to correct its sectarian balance and give Lebanon's other communities more control over its policies and actions. That law, passed last year despite the opposition of the Lebanese Front, remains on the shelf, waiting for the President of the Republic to sign the decrees needed for its implementation. Failure to implement it clearly indicates the State's bias in favor of the Lebanese Front, the leftists hold, and makes the Lebanese Army totally unacceptable.

SUDDEN DECISION

What detonated the Army issue was Syria's sudden decision last Sunday, February 3, to pull its troops out of Beirut. The pull-out, originally planned to take place almost overnight, would have eliminated the buffer between the east and west sides of the capital and brought the antagonists of the 1975-76 war face to face again, making a resumption of nationwide hostilities virtually impossible to avoid.

As last week's issue of this magazine was being distributed, Premier Selim Hoss was on his way to Damascus, seeking an explanation of the Syrian decision and hoping to persuade President Hafez Assad to either reverse it or delay its implementation long enough for the Lebanese government to arrange for an alternative buffer.

The postponement ("a few days," said Hoss, but with no specific withdrawal deadline) gave the Lebanese government enough time to come up with the alternative buffer — the Lebanese Army — but not time enough to muster leftist support for the switch.

And without that support, my military source told me, the Cabinet decision is nothing but "a public position, announced purely for information purposes, but inapplicable."

He added: "Look at past patterns. The Army cannot be effective unless it deploys with the approval of the parties concerned, and does so in strength. This has happened only in Furn esh-Shebbak, Ain Remmaneh and Hadath (suburbs of Lebanese Front-dominated East Beirut). There the Army is present and effective because its deployment was demanded by all parties concerned — the National Liberal Party and the Phalangist Party, both of which wanted the clashes between their militias stopped and because it was deployed in strength. The Army is present in Ashrafiyeh (East Beirut), Metn, Keserwan, the road to Tripoli — yes. But it may as well not be there, because its presence is merely symbolic, and it is powerless to act...

"Some people think the Army should impose itself, ride roughshod over all objections to its presence and deploy by force. It's a nice thought, but it's nothing more. The Army has neither the men nor the arms nor the equipment for that sort of operation."

The man in uniform smiled wearily when I pointed out to him that the Cabinet decision includes a paragraph calling for an Army-ADF-ISF security plan covering the entire country.

"The implementation of that part of the decision is the pivot of the whole issue," he said. "If that paragraph is translated into action, Army deployment in Beirut will become possible. But the

implementation of this comprehensive, joint security plan preassumes total coordination between the ADF and the Army. Had that coordination been possible, the Syrian decision to pull out of Beirut would not have arisen in the first place — not the way it arose, at any rate."

THE RIFT

The root of the Syrian decision to drop Beirut into the lap of the Lebanese authorities, complete with unfillable security gaps, was a deep rift between the Lebanese and Syrian authorities, my military source told me.

I asked him to what he attributed this rift, and I got a silent shrug in answer.

"But I know this," he said. "If the withdrawal does go through, and if the Lebanese authorities do not make a move at the highest possible level to contain the consequences, the detonation of Beirut will be more than a possibility. It will be a probability."

Moves at the next-to-highest possible level were in motion on Saturday, with House Speaker Kamel Asaad going to Damascus for talks with President Assad after private consultations with President Sarkis and Premier Hoss.

The official presentation of the Asaad initiative was that the parliamentary leader was "looking into" Lebanese-Syrian relations with a view to finding out where the trouble was and helping mend it.

But it is general knowledge that the trouble is between President Sarkis and President Assad, and that Mr. Asaad's mission is to break the ice that has formed at the summit.

How the ice formed is a matter of nationwide speculation, and none of the officials I approached last week was willing to deliver himself of any opinion on the subject.

In fact, every Lebanese personality who has access to authoritative information on this matter developed lockjaw last week, although two such personalities agreed to bare their souls to me after I swore on a stack of assorted holy books that their identity would go with me to the grave.

Said one: "The Lebanese authorities learned about the Syrian decision to pull the ADF out of Beirut and the suburbs last Sunday. Before that, no official had any inkling of the Syrian plan.

"The suddenness of the move was a clear expression of Syrian displeasure with the Lebanese authorities — specifically with the President, who is the commander of the Arab Deterrent Forces. It was the clearest demonstration yet of the strained relations, lack of coordination, and loss of confidence between the two countries.

"The loss of confidence can be traced back to the incidents which started two years ago almost to the day — the 1978 clashes between the militias of the Lebanese Front and the Syrian troops of the ADF. The Syrian government felt at that time that the Lebanese State sided with the militias, which are illegal, against the ADF, which is a legal force, although State support for the militias may have been veiled.

"Syria also feels that Foreign Minister (at one point Defense Minister) Fuad Butros and the director of Army Intelligence Johnny Abdo are virtually Lebanese Front in their allegiance, and Syrian officials view the President's considerable dependence on those two men with undisguised suspicion. President Sarkis' continued dependence on them despite his knowledge of the Syrian attitude has helped deepen the chasm between Damascus and Baabda."

This Syrian attitude, my source informed me, is shared by Premier Hoss, despite the latter's considerable efforts to conceal his differences with the President on this matter.

"The cooling of relations between the President and the prime minister," he said, "is primarily due to His Excellency's total confidence in the views and advice of his foreign minister and his Army Intelligence director — a confidence which Premier Hoss does not share. However, Premier Hoss' position and his personal relations with the President, which date back to pre-war days, impose on him a certain reticence in his approach to this problem."

It is Syria's knowledge of the differences between President Sarkis and Premier Hoss, and of the lack of influence the premiership has on the Presidency at this stage, that makes Premier Hoss an inadequate mediator in the official Lebanese-Syrian dispute, the source said. Hence Speaker Asaad's Damascus visit — as a possible prelude to a Lebanese-Syrian summit, probably to be preceded by "indirect summit contacts" through a personal emissary of the Lebanese President.

POLITICAL COLLISIONS

Continuing his comments on the Lebanese-Syrian rift, my source pointed out to me that recent developments relating to South Lebanon and Afghanistan had not helped smooth Syria's ruffled feathers.

"I'm referring to the Lebanese position at the Arab summit conference in Tunis last November, when Lebanon submitted a working paper calling for Lebanese Army deployment in South Lebanon and the elimination of all armed presence (Palestinian and Lebanese leftist) in the operation area of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)," he said. "That demand was first

presented by Foreign Minister Butros at the preparatory meeting for the Tunis summit, and you will recall that there was quite a violent confrontation between Mr. Butros and the Palestinian and Syrian representatives at that time. As it turned out, the Lebanese demand was overruled, and Lebanese officialdom reacted by expressing its reservations for the record...

"Then came the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. At the General Assembly, while Syria abstained when the anti-Soviet resolution came to a vote, Lebanon voted in favor. And while Syria boycotted the Islamabad conference on Afghanistan, Lebanon attended.

"Throughout this period, the Syrians were sending veiled messages to Lebanon about official trends which they considered anti-Syrian. They felt, for instance, that the Lebanese Army was being nurtured on anti-Syrian indoctrination, and that Lebanese officialdom was being too lax in its control of anti-Syrian propaganda in Lebanese media...

"All this was bound to come to a head. It did, last Sunday."

THE REASONS

My other source, who kept his guard up despite his anonymity, told me that he could not say whether the reasons which Syria presented to the Lebanese authorities were "the real reasons" that prompted the withdrawal decision. All he could do, he said, was tell me what Damascus said — and what it said, in a nutshell, was this:

There is a great deal of adverse publicity against the ADF in Lebanon which Syria is no longer willing to tolerate. The way the Lebanese were talking about the ADF, the world was beginning to view the Syrian troops in Lebanon as an "occupation force," not a peace-keeping force which is in the country to achieve objectives on which Lebanon and Syria have been in total agreement, to wit, the preservation of the unity of the country and its identity as a member of the Arab community. Foreign sources to whom the Syrians speak often give the impression that Lebanon regards the ADF as a burden, instead of a help.

This trend has been accentuated by Lebanese media which have made it a policy to either invent stories about ADF violations or exaggerate minor incidents (unavoidable in such circumstances) into national disasters. The longer this has gone on, the more friction there has been between the ADF troops and the Lebanese people, and this is something Damascus is not ready to accept.

This is specially true since the ADF did not come to Lebanon to serve as a police force, but to help achieve the objective of national accord. In four years of ADF presence, the Lebanese authorities have made no move in the direction of that goal.

End of Syrian message.

But the question remains, why did the Syrians decide to withdraw now — not five months or a year ago, say?

The answers to that question are a dime a dozen, and they have been filling the pages of local newspapers for a week. They touch on everything from Afghanistan, and the Soviet desire to draw attention away from it, to the normalization of Egyptian-Israeli relations, and Syria's desire to throw a spanner in the unilateral peace works.

The official Syrian media, which originally explained the withdrawal from Beirut as part of preparations for an expected Israeli attack, later added another reason: the ADF is not a police force, and if the Lebanese authorities really want peace, they should stop resting on Syria's laurels and start looking for national accord — the one thing, other than the ADF, that can keep the Beirut volcano from erupting.

The media dismissed all speculation about "regional motives" behind the Syrian move as an attempt by imperialist lackeys to divert attention from the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities for the current situation.

Only one of my sources for this report hazarded a guess on this subject.

"I would say that Syria has been wanting to draw the line for some time," he said. "That it has not done this before is probably due to the fact that its internal situation was not totally satisfactory before, and that it did not have enough external support.

"Syria consolidated its internal situation during the recent Syrian Baath conference, when certain corrective decisions were taken to strengthen the regime. Then came the Afghanistan issue and Syria's anti-American position on it, which brought it all the support it needed from the Soviet Union. My guess is that Syria made its move now because it finds itself in an internal and international position to make it."

THE CONSEQUENCES

My military source was none too optimistic about the possible consequences of this move. My political sources did not dispel the gloom.

"The Lebanese government," one told me, "arrived at the Army deployment decision despite its knowledge of two important facts: that the Army cannot possibly be deployed in West Beirut at this stage, and that its deployment along the green line will involve a great deal of risk.

"There is absolutely no question of Army deployment in West Beirut, but the Army must be — and will be — deployed along the

green line, simply because there is no alternative. The Internal Security Forces, with a little stretch of the imagination, may be seen as capable of keeping a lid on the security situation in the west side, given the cooperation which the National Movement and the National Front have promised to provide, but there is no way that they can take and hold the green line. There, there's no alternative to the Lebanese Army.

"So what you will have if the Syrians withdraw is a shaky security situation in West Beirut and the possibility of hostilities along the green line — between the Army and the leftist militias, or between the leftist and rightist militias, or both.

"In short, I'm scared. A Syrian withdrawal would leave Lebanon on the brink of war again. What we are facing now is a very real threat to the central government, and therefore to Lebanon."

And what about all the talk about the possibility of national accord emerging from this panic?

"I don't think we're moving in the direction of national accord," he said, "not as long as the Lebanese-Syrian rift exists. As long as the Syrians remain a party in this country, they have to contribute to national accord, either with the Lebanese authorities or through them. I believe it was wrong not to move in the direction of accord and involve the Syrians in the initiative."

THE LAW

It was also wrong to have the defense law approved by Parliament and then shelve it in the Baabda palace, he said.

"The decrees that are needed to implement that law have not been signed yet; they haven't even been prepared," he said, adding vaguely, "Some people are delaying them. I don't think those people are justified."

On the matter of the defense law implementation, my military source waxed eloquent.

"The leftist parties and Syria agree that the Army in its present form tilts in the direction of one sect and one political-sectarian faction, and they are not going to accept this — not now, not later," he said. "They seem to favor the defense law which Parliament passed, although that law, in my view, simply consecrates the sectarianism of the Army. At any rate, the implementation decrees for this law have not been signed, and if they are signed, it's not going to be easy to apply them. There are

certain leaders — top-level officials and officers included — who are doing their best to maintain the old law, especially the part that relates to the structure of the Army, because they feel the new law strips a certain community of guarantees which it is not willing to relinquish in a sectarian system of government."

Given this attitude in high places, what are the chances of a Lebanese-Syrian — and an inter-Lebanese — breakthrough?

Everyone appears unwilling to speculate — more out of fear of their own speculation, I felt, than out of ignorance. Every knowledgeable source I talked to appeared to feel that the immediate future of Beirut — and Lebanon — hinged on the ability of the Syrian and Lebanese leaders to patch up their differences.

And everyone is clinging to the hope that the differences can be patched up.

What encourages them to hope is the fact that Syria did agree to postpone the withdrawal from Beirut, and did leave the date — and even the nature — of the withdrawal vague.

"The Lebanese government," one of my sources said, "first heard that it would be an outright withdrawal. It was later informed that only a regrouping of forces would be involved.

"The Syrians sound serious about this, and the government has no choice but to take it seriously and deal with the matter on the assumption that the withdrawal is definitely taking place. But no one knows yet whether it's going to be a pull-out from Beirut or a regrouping in the sense that the troops would be taken off the streets and grouped in buildings and so on, so that contact between them and the people would end. What they are doing so far looks more like a regrouping operation, and the word 'regrouping' was used by Syrian officials repeatedly in their talks with the Lebanese. But the picture is not clear yet, and no one really knows what is going to happen next. All options are wide open."

PERSIAN GULF AREA

BRIEFS

BRITISH ARMS TO PERSIAN GULF--London--Arab sources have said that the British Government has at last agreed to respond to the Gulf states' purchasing orders for British arms. These sources added that the orders were shelved in the past for political reasons connected with the area's situation. However, the events in Iran and Afghanistan have prompted the British Government to reconsider its stand. [Text] [JN160722 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 16 Feb 80 p 1 JN]

CSO: 4802

QATAR

BRIEFS

ALPHA-JETS PURCHASED--Qatar has just purchased 6 Alpha-jet ground-support and training aircraft [from France]. It is interesting to note that this is the first order for these aircraft to come from a Middle Eastern country. [Text] [Paris DEFENSE INTERARMEEES in French Feb 80 p 9]

CSO: 4800

SULTANATE OF OMAN

MINISTERS RECEIVE PRC TRADE DELEGATION

LD101729 Salalah Domestic Service in Arabic 1300 GMT 10 Feb 80 LD/EA

[Text] His Excellency Sa'id Ahmad al-Shanfari, the minister of petroleum and minerals, today received the delegation of Chinese businessmen, currently on a visit to the sultanate, which is led by Mr Chen Jie, the Chinese vice minister of foreign trade, with whom he discussed the development and consolidation of relations between the two countries with particular reference to stepping up oil and minerals exploitation, on which the two sides exchanged views.

This morning His Excellency 'Abd al-Hafiz Salim Rajab, the minister of agriculture and fisheries, had a meeting in his office with the Chinese delegation during which the two sides discussed their respective experiences in the field of agriculture and fisheries. The Chinese delegation expressed its country's readiness to help the sultanate develop its agricultural and fisheries potential.

(?Later) the Chinese delegation visited His Excellency Muhammad 'Abdallah al-Harithi, the minister of electricity and water. During this meeting there were discussions on the points [words indistinct] between the two countries and ways of developing bilateral cooperation. His excellency the Chinese vice minister of foreign trade referred to the agreement signed by the two countries yesterday, saying that this would serve to strengthen electric power capacity. During the meeting agreement was reached on continuing contacts between the two countries with a view to increased bilateral cooperation.

CSO: 4802

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD LEADER VIEWS 'ALAWITE GOVERNMENT

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 8 Feb 80 p 29 LD

[Interview with 'Isam al-'Attar, leader of one of the Muslim Brotherhood wings in Syria, by AL-HAWADITH correspondent in Bonn; date not given]

[Text] When AL-HAWADITH correspondent in Bonn, West Germany, asked 'Isam al-'Attar, leader of one of the Muslim Brotherhood wings in Syria, about his stand following the formation of the new Syrian Government, he said:

The formation of the new government does not affect my stand because I am not opposed to any particular government but basically to the dictatorial regime and its existing institutions in defense of the identity of all the people without exception.

[Question] What are the demands you seek to achieve?

[Answer] A halt to haphazard arrests, barbaric tortures, sham trials and overt and covert murder; the release of the political prisoners; a stop to fighting Islam and the various Muslim groups, an end to the state of emergency which has been in force since 8 March 1963; abolishment of the extraordinary courts whose judges are not subject to the supreme judicial council; respect for human rights and basic freedoms as defined by the Islamic and divine religions, the international declaration of human rights and other international conventions; freedom of expression in speech, in writing and in publication; and freedom to assemble, demonstrate, form parties and take the appropriate measures that enable the people to freely choose their system of life and government. Our struggle to liberate our Islamic peoples from foreign domination and internal dictatorships is an indivisible part of our struggle to achieve the peace that will block the way to the calls for communist, social or liberal government because Islam is in itself the biggest guarantee for mankind's freedom, dignity and security.

[Question] Why are you charging the 'Alawites with atheism at the present time and extracting religious rulings made to this effect by Ulema who lived hundreds of years ago?

[Answer] That is not true. Our magazine AL-RA'ID has published an article saying that we do not judge the beliefs of the new generations of 'Alawites and others by merely referring to the beliefs of their forefathers in old history books. Whoever claims to be a Muslim and whose deeds conform with his claim, then he is a Muslim as far as we are concerned. Whoever renounces Islam is not a Muslim even if his forefathers were Abu-Bakr, 'Uthman or 'Ali [caliphs] or is a descendant of the prophet. We do not antagonize the 'Alawites because they are 'Alawites but we oppose their sectarian dictatorship. When their dictatorship ends, they will be regarded as compatriots having the same rights and duties as we. As of now we extend our hand to every sincere 'Alawite who disavows sectarian dictatorship and cooperates with us to regain the people's freedom and rights. We are opposed to this dictatorship in the name of Islam and the other divine religions, the sublime human values and the recognized international laws--that is, in accordance with all divine and earthly standards. Islam in Syria, in the Arab countries and in the Muslim world is not for the Muslims alone but for all the people. Islam does not acknowledge blind fanaticism but teaches the Muslims to be just at all times and to support what is right even if it is against them, their parents or their relatives.

[Question] Do you prefer the Muslim Brotherhood to be the only one in a position of leadership for effecting change?

[Answer] The country is not for us alone. The question involves all the people. All individuals, particularly those who are in a guiding or influential position, have the right to declare their opinion and position openly and clearly. I believe that the greatest possible popular unanimity is necessary for the attainment of the people's demands.

[Question] Certain international newspapers have reported that you prefer violent methods to any other method to attain participation in the government.

[Answer] That is ridiculous and surprising to everyone who knows me or who is aware of the situation in the country. My history in all its phases and aspects refutes these allegations. Knowledgeable Syrians of all inclinations are aware that I have never basically sought participation in the government, that I have constantly and insistently refused such participation, that I have rejected every ministerial position offered to me at any one time despite the pressures and urgings to which I was sometimes subjected and that the position I have chosen for myself is that of serving my faith and nation on the intellectual and popular levels. As for violence, it is the last means man resorts to when all other ways and means are blocked before him and when it is required by necessity and interest and permissible under Islamic law.

GAFSA ATTACK ORGANIZER PROMISES OTHER INCIDENTS

LD261535 Paris L'UNITE in French 21-27 Feb 80 pp 9-10 LD

[Interview with unnamed "organizer" of Gafsa attack, by Guy Perrimond: "Tunisia: Testimony of a Gafsa Soldier"; first four paragraphs are introductory]

[Text] Underground fighters: As a journalist I have met all sorts. Those who chose conventional struggles, those who chose armed struggle. There were those destined to succeed and who knew it, and those bound to disappear with their movement. There were dreamers who had seriously chosen death, separated from the others, from all the others by their choice. And realists. Often too much so.

First contact is difficult with a foreigner representing a secret movement which has chosen armed struggle and has proven itself capable of resorting to action. The following interview is with one of these men. A Tunisian, one of the main officials in the movement which organized the Gafsa attack, has been in France for several days. On his comrades' behalf he has come here to recount their struggles.

It is often difficult for a Frenchman to admit the justice of armed struggle, not to seek other possible ways. To believe sometimes that a movement is not "in the pay" of a foreigner. To consider provocation, manipulation, to assess which special services can be of assistance. And to what end.

All this is true. But it is also true that most of these movements are rooted in their people. Otherwise they fail very quickly. The Gafsa events and the revelations here prove that this was no handful of "desperadoes," but that the Tunisian situation is serious. That our government has a hand in it. And that this threatens to continue.

The choices made by the revolutionary movement for the liberation of Tunisia give different evaluations and judgments. Silence on certain matters--Libya for example--can be weighed and interpreted. But the text that we publish out of concern for information must be read. It proves that there is something rotten in Tunisia.

[Question] How was the Gafsa attack organized?

[Answer] The plan was perfected a little more than 2 months before the chosen date. After defining our precise objectives we decided on the place and drew up the list of participants--a little under 300.

The week before the attack, they each reached the south independently. It has not always been easy to move around in Tunisia since 26 January 1978; the police checks are frequent. You need not only identity papers but a reason.

Near Gafsa there are spas well-known for their therapeutic qualities: the Hamma spas. Seeking a cure became the alibi. Elsewhere we had arms caches. Enough to make it difficult for the regime to find proof of foreign aid in our armament. The Sahara is a region where you can move about and travel long distances, crossing frontiers.... At 2200 hours on 26 January we were all in position.

[Question] How did the attack take place?

[Answer] On the 27th at 1030 a first group attacked the Gafsa police station. Then a second attacked the national guard post. We made much noise, increasing our automatic weapon fire to make it seem like a genuine invasion. A third group got into the Ahmed Tlili barracks.

Our initial plan was that it would all be over by 0700. We wanted to protect civilian life as much as possible by avoiding having the army arrive in Gafsa while fighting was still going on. Unfortunately, we did not succeed.

[Question] Why?

[Answer] The least battle-hardened of our soldiers had no self-control. They wanted to fight and did so. Certainly, this was a blow against the regime, but, by holding out for 3 days, they allowed the army to strengthen its repression.

Nevertheless, the essential point went according to plan. In the night, a section of our soldiers withdrew, taking weapons captured from the police, the guard or the army. First by truck, then by tracks in the mountains where they hid these arms. Then they returned home to resume normal life.

[Question] What happened to those who remained in Gafsa?

[Answer] The groups who remained had to cover the retreat of those who were to hide the weapons. These are the ones who "held out" for 3 days. I do not know the exact number of dead and wounded. I know that some fell during the fighting, that others died under torture. The government would very much like to pick up our tracks. This will be difficult. Our members hide few secrets; our structure insures that individually we know little about the overall organization.

[Question] What were your objectives?

[Answer] There were many. On the military plane we know the regime's real strength. We know the present disproportion of the correlation of forces on that plane. We do not have the means to occupy Gafsa, then Gabes, then Sfax, to set up a front and then, after a victorious military campaign, overthrow the regime. Above all, we do not want a civil war.

Our aims were more limited. First, France had to know that, since 26 January 1978, the Tunisian people have been living in fear. Many thought: "This regime is too strong. It is untouchable." We have shattered that idea. Our attack on Gafsa told our people: "This regime is not as strong as all that. A lot can be done. Look, act." And we did it in the only ground where the regime seemed strong--violence. And our members were hidden and protected by the population in Gafsa during the last 2 days. That is how most of them were able to retreat. Elsewhere, there were many strikes directly connected to the Gafsa fighting. The people's support took diverse but effective forms. It shows that our first goal was attained.

Then we wanted justice, by judging and executing commissioner Barka who was one of the 26 January 1978 torturers. He was decorated for that. We captured him. Judged him. He admitted that he paid greater allegiance to Mohammed Sayah, head of the Destourian Party Militia, than to the interior minister!

[Question] Why did you choose Gafsa?

[Answer] The south had old traditions of struggle. For independence, then for trade unions. The south is a deprived region. We did not want to start with a big city. Gafsa, with its miners, surrounded by farm workers leading a miserable life, has symbolic value. But our members came from all over Tunisia. We did not want to "regionalize" our movement...and uncover all or local cadres. The 300 soldiers chosen for this operation represented all the provinces and tribes of Tunisia. That holds promise for later....

[Question] Did the French army supply the present regime with substantial assistance?

[Answer] The "logistical" assistance was real. Better still--and the Tunisian papers announced this--French troops have reportedly been transported to Bizerte, Sfax and Medenine. The French Government has thus stated its preference. We ask it to think, to reconsider. It has to choose

between the people and the regime. Peoples live a long time, a very long time. While regimes collapse. The French Government should remember that in 1944-45 Tunisians "died for France." It should think of the future. We have declined to "lean on" tourists, for example. The French must know that our people have a struggle to wage and that they must be left to settle their problems alone. Without intervention. That holds good for our "enemies" and for our "friends."

[LD261537] [Question] What was Libya's role?

[Answer] We reject any tutelage. And we have all the armaments necessary, not to mention those that can be gotten from the regime. I would be wary of judging a neighboring country. Things are complicated enough for that. But if, one day, we need to find assistance, we believe that on that day we will be able to.

[Question] How did the Tunisian Government react?

[Answer] First, by repression. Then, especially, by trying to internationalize events. By appealing to France, Morocco and the United States. By condemning Libya. It should be noted, though, that opinions are divided within the governing group. Some, like the prime minister, hope for and are organizing intervention and foreign assistance. Hedi Nouira believes that he will thereby be able to establish his power after Bourguiba's death. Others, like Destourian Socialist Party leader Mohamad Sayah, are opposed to it. The latter, controller of a militia of several thousand well-trained and well-armed people, believes a French presence would overshadow his present and future authority. You must realize that Sayah already refuses to obey orders from the ministers of the interior and defense. He himself organizes investigations and distributes weapons. Thus he believes that, when the moment comes, he will come to power without French help. His thirst for power is real. It was he who once stated: "What interests me is governing the country," adding: "and when I govern you will see what I will make of this people."

[Question] What is your relationship with the opposition?

[Answer] The revolutionary movement for the liberation of Tunisia appeals to everybody. Indeed, within the very diverse opposition there is a picturesque part comprising, for example, former ministers who recently participated actively in repression. Some seem hesitant, wanting to gage the measure of our strength and utilize the wave set off by the Gafsa attack. The government is trying to attract certain elements to itself. The essential thing is that everyone joins in a common battle.

[Question] How did your movement start?

[Answer] The French know the Tunisia of sun and sea. The tourists' Tunisia. But, above all, our people also know extreme poverty--bread is dear here for farm workers who barely earn more than FR3 a day--repression and shantytowns.

Until January 1978 the trade unions channeled the will for change. This is no longer possible. You have to keep quiet and avoid Sayah's militia informers. You have to tolerate the intolerable: the prostitution of young girls--tourism has something to do with that--and unemployment. After 26 January 1978 we decided to implant a clandestine movement. Everywhere. Our structure is somewhat complicated to avoid being decapitated. And we changed our tactics: secrecy without concrete aim is untenable. If the Tunisians are peaceful, and we are Tunisian, it was clear that the only outlet was violence. We are forced into this by a regime which has not respected its own legality. We decided to use arms to liberate our people.

Now we have local members among the working people, the teachers and students, the police and the army.

[Question] What is your program?

[Answer] The 1977 Tunisian General Workers' Union (UGTT) Congress proposals are still valid. Basically, our charter proposes that the people should choose their future. That Tunisia should be independent of all forms of imperialism. We must be clear in this since even nonalignment has become a ground for confrontation between the two camps. And we do not see ourselves in either. We want peace in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. Equality--true equality--between men and women, between rich peoples and the others, in other words, a socialist regime. We want a real Arabization of Tunisia, for our people to rediscover their personality. And we are Muslim, that goes without saying.

[Question] What, in your view, is going to happen in Tunisia?

[Answer] The power struggle is going to continue between the regime's different factions. But we are there to remind them that the people must not be forgotten. Thus there will be fresh confrontations.

[Question] You mean that other coups, like Gafsa, will occur?

[Answer] Yes, we will begin again. Soon, as soon as necessary, other than in the south this time.

CSO: 4400

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

BRIEFS

RADIO STATION AGREEMENT--Abu Dhabi, 26 Feb--According to an agreement which was signed today by the UAE Information and Culture Ministry and the French Investment Company for Television and Radio Services (SOFRA), the company will construct a broadcasting station in Al-Dab'ah District in the UAE. Information and Culture Minister Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Hamid Al Nuhayan signed the agreement for the UAE and Zuhayr al-Bidhri, the company's representative in Abu Dhabi, signed it on behalf of his company. The station will cover the Gulf area, the Middle East, Pakistan and northwest India and will have a 4,000 kilowatt power. [Text] [NC261157 Manama Gulf News Agency in Arabic 1111 GMT 25 Feb 80 NC]

CSO: 4802

END

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